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Hyland Crest residents and staff test negative for COVID-19

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

Residents and staff of the Hyland Crest long-term care facility in Minden have tested negative for COVID-19.

At press time, Hyland Crest remained under a declared outbreak after two essential caregivers tested positive for the virus on Jan. 31.

However, Haliburton Highlands Health Services confirmed on Feb. 3 that test results for residents had come back negative.

"We share this news with a sense of caution, because we know that this testing provides us one 'picture in time' and that we must remain extremely vigilant about our infection prevention and control measures," HHHS CEO Carolyn Plummer said in a press release.

HHHS continues to monitor residents, who will remain in isolation for the remainder of the declared outbreak.

"Essential caregivers, who provide important physical and emotional support to long-term care residents, will continue to be required to demonstrate a negative COVID-19 test within the past seven days before accessing our facilities," the release reads.

see 'VIGILANCE' page 4



A look inside

Craig Belfry, the director of community services for the Township of Minden Hills, walks beside the ice surface at the Minden arena during a guided tour of the new Minden Hills recreation complex with *Times* photographer Darren Lum on Monday, Feb. 8. Take a sneak peek of the new facility in a photo essay featured on pages 10 through 12. /Photo by DARREN LUM Staff

No consultation on closure of fire college

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

There is some concern amongst municipal leaders in Ontario about the Ford government's decision to close the Ontario Fire College, based in Gravenhurst and which

has been a training facility for firefighters for decades.

"There's a little bit of fuss out there," Algonquin Highlands Mayor Carol Moffatt said during a township council meeting Feb. 4. "There was no consultation by the province to any organized group about it. There's no question that online training for firefighters can be easily handled. There is concern

about what the practical [training] is going to look like, because there is two sides to fire training. It's kind of potentially downloading by stealth, because someone's going to have to pay for it."

The provincial government announced the closure of the college in mid-January, and while the initial plan it presented was to

see MOFFATT page 4

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A dream come true to run Ray's Place

by **DARREN LUM**
Times Staff

Scott and Kate-lynn Boesveld of Cambridge came to the area to fulfill a dream of running their own business.

Last year on Oct. 29, they officially took ownership of Ray's Place, which is set against a rugged backdrop of Minden Hills, and includes 131 acres, a 14 kilometre trail for offroad vehicles, 60 campsites and 13 motel rooms, located a few kilometres from downtown Minden off of Hwy 121.

Their path to buying the well-known property among offroad enthusiasts actually started from a visit.

"We came here once and joked about buying the place," said Kate-lynn. "We thought about it more as COVID was happening. We like to work together as a family and be together."

Married for nine years, the high school sweethearts had always talked about having a business they could call their own such as a campground or a garden centre.

"Pretty much when we got married we wanted a campground," she said. "That was the talk, but then this came up."

Kate-lynn believes there was divine intervention related to how everything worked out for them.

"This is where God wanted us to be," Kate-lynn said.

They said it was ideal timing, as they were ready to buy and its previous owner of seven years, Ray Gervais was intent on selling.

Both of them know about small businesses first hand.

Kate-lynn's parents ran a green house centre where she last worked while Scott's mom ran a boarding kennel. They learned about the long work days and the sacrifice it takes to run a small business, but also saw the benefits.

"You can't leave the business as much. It's been instilled in us," she said. "Working together and that's what grows your marriage too I find. Instead of having separate jobs, I find we can share things together and have plans to do it together."

Scott has enjoyed his work days, which include going out before breakfast, and then returning to join his family for coffee before going out again to work. Since moving to the area, his family of Kate and two-year-old daughter Taylr Jane has seen the addition of a son, Hunter Paul.

"It's nice. It's not like I'm gone for eight to 10 hours a day, everyday," he said.

With a background as an electrician and a project manager for 12 years, Scott said he's transferred those skills to the new business, which include renovations and interpersonal relations.



The Boesveld family of Taylr Jane, from left, Scott, Kate-lynn, and Minden's newest addition Hunter Paul are the new owners of Ray's Place. The couple are excited about being the new owners and the potential they see in their first business foray. /DARREN LUM Staff

After several months of ownership, the couple feel like they have transitioned to their new lives as business owners.

Owning an established business with a reputation among offroad enthusiasts for being the place to stay at when visiting the Highlands has been a bonus.

"As soon as we took over people have been booking non-stop. We've been very lucky in that sense. We're not starting from scratch. It's good to have a base [of customers]," said Kate-lynn.

Scott expects a busy summer. They're nearly all booked for the May 24 long weekend, he said.

Long-time guests don't need to worry about drastic changes, but the young business owners are intent on bringing the business in to the 21st century by establishing a way for online booking to be carried out by smart phone users for both major platforms, including working out how to provide followers with notifications related to

the business.

"We want it so people can book it in instead of having to deal with us if we're busy. We don't need to be by the phone. It's nice to provide that freedom to people," said Kate-lynn.

Scott said he was set to welcome sledders to stay with them, even going so far as creating his own two kilometre snowmobile trail from their property to the B112 snowmobile trail, but provincial measures related to the pandemic disallowed any bookings for short-term stays. Currently, there are a few long-term renters on site, who have helped the business during the winter.

Although the recent provincial restrictions prevented bookings for January, one benefit was it provided more time to work on upgrades and repairs in the rented rooms, but also to caring for Hunter Paul, who has required greater care with his diagnosis of Hirschsprung's disease, as reported last week by the *Minden Times*.

The couple credit friends and family with helping them through their challenges.

The new business owners are excited to contribute to the community however they can. They believe there is potential to draw new guests to their place during the winter when it is typically quieter by adding Nordic trails and maybe a skating track.

"We want to draw people from different areas too. Not just for offroading," said Kate-lynn.

Her husband said the concept of an "adventure park" appeals to him. It would be part of an effort to make their business more of a family oriented place. This could include adding a play structure and possibly bringing the on-site swimming pool back to a state of operation, depending on costs.

Although it is not expected to open until May, the couple are very complimentary about Val's Soul Food led by a mother

“

It's beautiful out here.
It's totally a different
environment. We love it
out here.

— KATE-LYNN BOESVELD

”

and daughter team of Val Braithwaite and Layla Johnson, who had operated from a food truck in front of Ray's Place starting this past autumn. From the Val's Soul Food website, they describe soul food as a blend of "Southern, Caribbean, and Canadian, blends of dishes."

Scott said Val's was very popular and they both recommend the food. If permitted, he would love to convert his garage space into a kitchen so Val and Layla can have a bigger operation to work from, which could enable greater capacity, including offering room service to their guests.

In addition to taking on the challenge of running a business for the first time, Scott and Kate-lynn said moving from home was a difficult aspect of the process, but was made easier with where they were going and how they feel about it.

"It was hard to leave friends and family. That was our No. 1. It's beautiful out here. It's totally a different environment. We love it out here. We do love it," said Kate-lynn.



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Six-letter word for Levasseur: winner

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

She was feeling lucky and it turned out she was right, with Carolanne Levasseur winning \$100,000 on a scratch ticket she purchased at Minden's On The Spot Variety.

"I only bought one, and I told the girl I was feeling lucky," Levasseur told the *Times*, adding she likes to play \$5 Instant Crossword tickets. She was in disbelief when she got home, scratched the ticket, and realized that \$5 had just been transformed into \$100,000.

"I had to scan it a few times to believe it," Levasseur said, explaining she'd headed back to the variety store after realizing that she'd won the top prize.

That win took place in December, with Levasseur recently receiving her cheque from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation.

In more normal times, after a win of this size, Levasseur would travel to Toronto for an interview and photo op and to pick up her cheque. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, that interview took place via Skype, with the cheque sent by courier.

"I've invested and paid off the car," said Levasseur of her plans for the money.

"And the rest is down the road," she said, adding she intends to make the windfall last as long as possible.



Carolanne Levasseur said she was feeling lucky before winning \$100,000 on a scratch ticket purchased at On the Spot Variety. /Submitted photo

AH to launch organic waste diversion pilot project

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

Algonquin Highlands council is planning to launch an organic waste diversion pilot project it hopes will encourage more residents to compost at home.

During a Feb. 4 online meeting, councillors received a report on a device called the Food Cycler from environmental co-ordinator Melissa Murray.

As a report from Murray read, "Diversion of organic waste from landfills in an important component in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector and achieving the goal of a zero-waste future. Ontario's waste stream is comprised of approximately 32 per cent organic waste."

Organic waste that is landfilled is more environmentally damaging since buried organic waste produces much more methane than waste that is composted.

"The Province of Ontario has identified keeping food and organic waste out of the disposal stream as a high priority for the province," Murray's report read. "The County of Haliburton corporate climate change mitigation plan included reducing and diverting organic waste from landfills as one of its four goals."

Nearly 80 per cent of the greenhouse gases produced by township-owned assets in Algonquin Highlands come from its landfills.

Enter the Food Cycler, a countertop device about the size of a bread machine that speeds up the natural decomposition process, grinding and drying up food waste and turning it into a "dry, odourless nutrient-dense by-product that is significantly reduced in weight and volume from its unprocessed state," Murray's report read. "The end product is free from bacteria, and weed seeds and food-borne pathogens."

"This is to generate interest, and generate discussion," Murray told councillors, as

“

I didn't think there would ever be a silver bullet to the problem of composting in bear country.

— COUNCILLOR JENNIFER DAILLOUX

”

she gave them a demonstration of the device during the Zoom-based meeting. "As soon as anybody tries it, they're like, 'I want one.'"

The machine's cycle takes about four to six hours, and the process is quiet and odourless.

The proposal was for the township to provide a subsidy to residents to purchase the devices, in order to incentivize composting at home.

"I didn't think there would ever be a silver bullet to the problem of composting in bear country," said Councillor Jennifer Dailoux, adding she thought a number of residents in Ward 3 would be interested. "I'm game for really trying this out."

The pilot project would be one aspect of a larger, organic waste diversion program. With a municipal subsidy of \$50, the cost for residents would be \$200, plus taxes and shipping, Murray's report indicated.

Mayor Carol Moffatt noted this price point would still put the devices out of reach for some residents.

Councillors were in favour of the pilot project, requesting more details about bulk purchasing and subsidy options come back to the council table.

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(VIRTUAL) COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are currently being conducted virtually via web conference and Closed Session meetings via teleconference, until further notice. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted.

The schedule of upcoming meetings are:

February 16 – Budget Standing Committee Meeting
February 25 – Regular Council Meeting
March 11 – Committee of the Whole Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link available on the township website at www.mindenhill.ca/council/ or by using the direct link provided in the notice. We encourage those wishing to view the meeting to also download the agenda, as it will not be displayed during the streaming process. Meeting agendas can be downloaded by visiting our website at www.mindenhill.ca/council/.

Please note the live-stream link provided for each meeting will only be activated while Council is in session.

WASTE REDUCTION TIP

Plastic bags are one of the most expensive and difficult to recycle materials. Use reusable bags whenever possible to reduce plastic waste!

FAMILY DAY WEEKEND

Minden Hills Council and Staff wish everyone a Safe and Healthy Family Day Holiday Weekend.

Please enjoy the holiday responsibly and within current Provincial guidelines. Administration Offices and services will be CLOSED on Monday Feb 15th.

LANDFILL SAFETY

With a higher winter population than normal, traffic at our waste sites is busier than usual. Please drive slowly and only attend if absolutely necessary.

NOTICE – 2021 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills will commence the 4th Round of its 2021 Budget deliberations during its Special Meeting of Council via web conference scheduled for February 16, 2021.

Trisha McKibbin, CAO/Clerk
705-286-1260 ext. 505
tmckibbin@mindenhill.ca

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Each year, Minden Hills Fire & Rescue responds to fires that are caused by improper disposal of hot coals or ashes from fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves, grills or mobile fireplaces designed for use on decks or patios.

The fact is that coals and ashes from fires can remain hot enough to start a fire for many days after you think the fire is out. The exact amount of time for complete extinguishment and cooling depends on many factors such as how hot the fire was, what was burning, how much unburned fuel remains, etc.

To be safe, simply treat all ashes and coals as hot, even when you think they had time enough to cool.

To properly dispose of ashes or coals we recommend the following:

- If possible, allow ashes to cool in area where fire was, fireplace, fire pit...
- When it is time to dispose of the ashes, transfer them to a metal container and wet them down.
- Keep the metal container outside your home and away from any combustibles until the refuse is hauled away.
- DO NOT** place any other combustibles in the metal container.
- DO NOT** use a combustible container.
- Keep fire extinguisher on hand.

Minden Tim Hortons staff recognized for kindness

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

The Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge is recognizing the staff of the Minden Tim Hortons for delivering meals to one of its elderly clients multiple times a day.

The identity of that client is being kept confidential, but a press release from the association indicates that individual was displaced from their

home due to a burst pipe in January. Without a permanent residence and while repairs were being made, the individual became reliant on local restaurants for meals, with a number of them closed amid the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff from Minden Tim Hortons have been delivering meals to this person three times a day, three to five days a week, for three weeks.

“It has now been over three weeks and the Tim Hortons continues to deliver food to the client. This means that three times a day, their staff are walking in the snow and personally delivering food

to this individual,” the release reads. “I’ve seen a lot of goodwill within the Minden community, especially through the pandemic, but this epitomizes the very best of this community and its ability to come together in times of crisis.”

“With everything that’s going on in the community with COVID-19 this is the least we can do,” said Audrina Upton, of Minden Tim Hortons.

“It’s nice to do something that is com-

munity-based. Our staff always come back from delivering the food with a smile on their face.”

“We would like to sincerely thank the Minden Tim Hortons for their kindness and for supporting this individual through this difficult time,” Jack Veitch, manager of community engagement and education for the association, said in the release.

COVID-19 Contacts, Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by County								
County	Current Cases Not Resolved	Current High-Risk Contacts	Current Probable Cases	Confirmed Cases (Total to date)	Confirmed Cases Resolved (Total to Date)	Hospitalizations (Total to date)	Confirmed Deaths (Total to date)	Probable Deaths (Total to date)
Haliburton	0	4	0	50	50	2	0	0
Northumberland	30	62	3	397	358	8	9	0
Kawartha Lakes	56	83	1	491	401	25	34	13
Total***	86	165	5	938	809	35	43	13

Zero local COVID-19 cases

Haliburton County has no current COVID-19 cases and four high-risk contacts as of a Feb. 9 update from the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit. On that same day, two new cases were reported in City of Kawartha Lakes, and three new cases in Northumberland County. /Screenshot from HKPRHU web site

County to remain in lockdown until Feb. 16

by MIKE BAKER
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The provincial stay-at-home order will remain in place for residents of Haliburton County for at least another week.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced on Monday [Feb. 8] that the lockdown had been extended for most of the province, with a transition back to the colour-coded regional shutdown measures to begin this week.

“Today, we’re seeing some sunlight break through the clouds,” Ford said in his address to the public. “My friends, the measures are working. Staying home is saving lives... We can’t return to normal, but we can transition out of the province-wide shut down.”

Three regions will see COVID-19 restrictions loosened on Wednesday [Feb. 10], with Hastings Prince Edward public health; Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington public health; and Renfrew County and district health

unit transitioning back to the green zone.

It’s expected that the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit will move out of lockdown on Feb. 16, alongside most other regions across the province. Ford announced however that Toronto, Peel and York regions would remain in lockdown until at least Feb. 22.

There was some good news for business owners, with Ford stating that non-essential retailers within lockdown zones, including ours, will be allowed to open their doors with a 25 per cent capacity limit. The same applies to some other businesses, including discount and big box retailers, liquor stores, hardware stores and garden centres.

Ford noted that personal care services are to remain closed, while gatherings at residences are still prohibited.

Indoor recreational fitness facilities and ski hills will also remain closed, Ford said.

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Moffatt questions potential liability concerns

from page 1

include new, regional training facilities, Moffatt said that had later been changed to having two mobile training units.

She questioned whether the changes might carry any liability concerns for municipalities, in terms of ensuring that all firefighters’ training meets

standards.

“There are municipalities that are passing resolutions to petition the province to have done something differently, or do something differently,” Moffatt said, adding she’d emailed Haliburton County’s other mayors regarding the issue.

‘Vigilance’ by HHHS staff continues

from page 1

On Feb. 6, HHHS confirmed that test results had also come back negative for Hyland Crest staff.

“Obviously this is a tremendous relief for everyone but it does not lessen the need for vigilance with infection prevention and control measures,” Plummer said in a statement. “The staff across our entire organization have been doing an exemplary job to date in this

regard and I know that we will all continue to do so.”

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Internet issues disrupt online learning for more than 150 students

by MIKE BAKER
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

When students from across Haliburton County returned to the classroom late last month, teen Finn Tentrees breathed a huge sigh of relief.

It has been a rough year for the Haliburton Highlands Secondary School [HHSS] victory lapper. Following the closure of all Ontario schools last March, and the subsequent transition to online learning, Finn was one of the many youth inexplicably left behind due to issues surrounding internet connectivity.

Speaking to the *Times* recently, Tentrees said he was forced to put his life on hold after struggling to adapt to a system he feels inadvertently isolated a portion of the province's student body. While he had plans to attend university following his Grade 12 year, an inability to access online study plans and live-streamed classes meant Finn fell behind in a couple of key subjects.

"The end of last year, honestly, was a bit of a nightmare," Tentrees admitted. "As we moved into online learning, most of my classes involved some element of livestreaming. Within a week I realized I wouldn't be able to do anything, as I couldn't load into the streams. I would get messages from friends telling me I'm dropping out of the live stream, but there was nothing I could do about it."

Like many people in Haliburton County, Tentrees lives rurally. He shares a home with his mom and little brother on Gelert Road, between Minden and Kinmount. Internet speed in that area is a huge problem, with Finn saying he sometimes has trouble completing even a simple Google search.

Services such as Netflix and YouTube are totally inaccessible, Finn says.

The other caveat is the internet package the family relies on includes a maximum monthly data allowance of 100 gigabytes. With two students attempting to learn from home and a mom who works in web design trying to keep up with her

workload, Finn says they regularly exceed that allowance. The family's most recent internet bill included a \$200 data overage fee.

Reflecting back on those particularly difficult weeks last year, Tentrees said his family had to come up with a schedule for when each of them could access the internet. When his time came around, although he tried, Finn admitted he didn't really know where to turn.

"When I was on [during the day], I'd spend an hour trying to get into the class. Then late at night, I'd lose track of time trying to figure out what I had missed from the live stream. Before I knew it, I'd wasted three hours doing nothing, because I really had no idea what I was doing," Tentrees said. "I felt kind of horrible about myself. After a few weeks in, I did kind of give up. I just couldn't do it anymore."

Most disappointing for Finn was missing out on a Grade 12 chemistry class – a big subject for a student hoping to study cognitive science at university. While his teacher offered support and guidance, Finn decided instead to forego the class, push off going to university and return to HHSS for an additional year.

"The reason I went for the victory lap is because I didn't learn anything from my chemistry class. I wasn't able to do the labs I was interested in doing – the online aspect of the class was wasted on me," Finn said. "Hopefully, with school back, I'll be able to learn something this time around."

Tentrees will begin his chemistry class in April.

Finn's story is just one of dozens across Haliburton County, says Marg Cox, executive director of Point in Time.

When Cox started to hear about some of the challenges rural students were facing as they tried to keep up with their studies in an online format, she knew that something needed to be done. She immediately went to work establishing a task force of sorts, committed to improving internet connectivity across Haliburton County.

"This is a very real issue in our community. Unfortunately, some of our students are being left very far behind simply

because they don't have access to reliable internet at their home," Cox said.

She estimated there are around 150 students across the county who require access to better internet. With that in mind, the group has started raising money to help pay for a "short-term solution" to the problem.

That solution involves the purchase and distribution of cell phones to students in need. The phones, provided by Rogers, will come equipped with 50 gigabytes of data – allowing students to hotspot internet from their phones. As of press time, the organization has raised \$95,574 and has an end goal of \$180,000. Cox says the committee has, thus far, ordered 90 devices from Rogers, with 15 of them already having been given to youth deemed to be most in need.

Even though schools across the county have returned to the classroom, Cox believes it's important to prepare for the worst in the event another closure occurs in the future.

While this issue has impacted families with poor connectivity the most, even those who thought their internet service was good have faced issues. Grade 12 student Megan Klose was forced to drive over to HHSS during last year's lockdown and sit in her car in the school's parking lot so that she could access the facility's WiFi and tune into her live-streamed classes. She estimates she made that trip at least 20 times.

While driving over to the school may seem extreme to some, Klose felt she had no other option.

"With the 22-day octomester we did, missing one day was just crazy. Missing one day's worth of classes was the equivalent to missing a week of school," Klose said.

She admitted many of her friends missed class for reasons outside of their control.

"Missing class was inevitable for people who don't have access to internet. I have a friend that, when it snows, doesn't have access at all. So on a bad weather day, she would be

see 'RELIABLE' page 8



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Back to the drawing board

AFTER SOME two years of discussions around the council table (and virtual council table) and embarking on a public input process, Haliburton County council has decided to halt its creation of a shoreline preservation bylaw, and will now hire a consulting firm to create such, conducting scientific and environmental reviews, as well as a public engagement process.

And that's not a bad idea. However, the ideal time to do that would have been two years ago.

As many readers will be aware, the draft shoreline preservation bylaw has caused no shortage of controversy in the community, with a number of critics calling it too restrictive and questioning the scientific merit behind some of its specifics, in particular a 30-metre setback on site alteration and the removal of vegetation. There has also been criticism, including from some members of county council itself, that the draft bylaw was too ambiguous and difficult to understand, and that the communications process surrounding it was not robust enough.

Tensions ramped up through January in particular, with a flood of emails from waterfront property owners to councillors, and to the newspaper. In some cases, it sounds like things turned nasty, with name-calling and the like, which is obviously just uncalled for.

The situation had become heated and chaotic, which is clearly not the environment in which to make a decision of such magnitude.

There was suggestion by a couple of council members about the

formation of a committee to steer the creation of a bylaw, an idea that was rightfully batted out of the air by Algonquin Highlands Mayor Carol Moffatt. As Moffatt pointed out, at this point, there is too much tension, too much animosity among too many people for such a committee to even have a hope at functioning effectively. A neutral, third party with associated expertise hired through an RFP process is a much better idea, however, the whole situation makes it difficult not to feel that the past couple of years have been a waste.

Hours and hours of council discussion, hours and hours of staff time, the creation of a public input mechanism that included materials provided by a communications firm, hours and hours of time spent by members of the public looking through the draft bylaw and providing input.

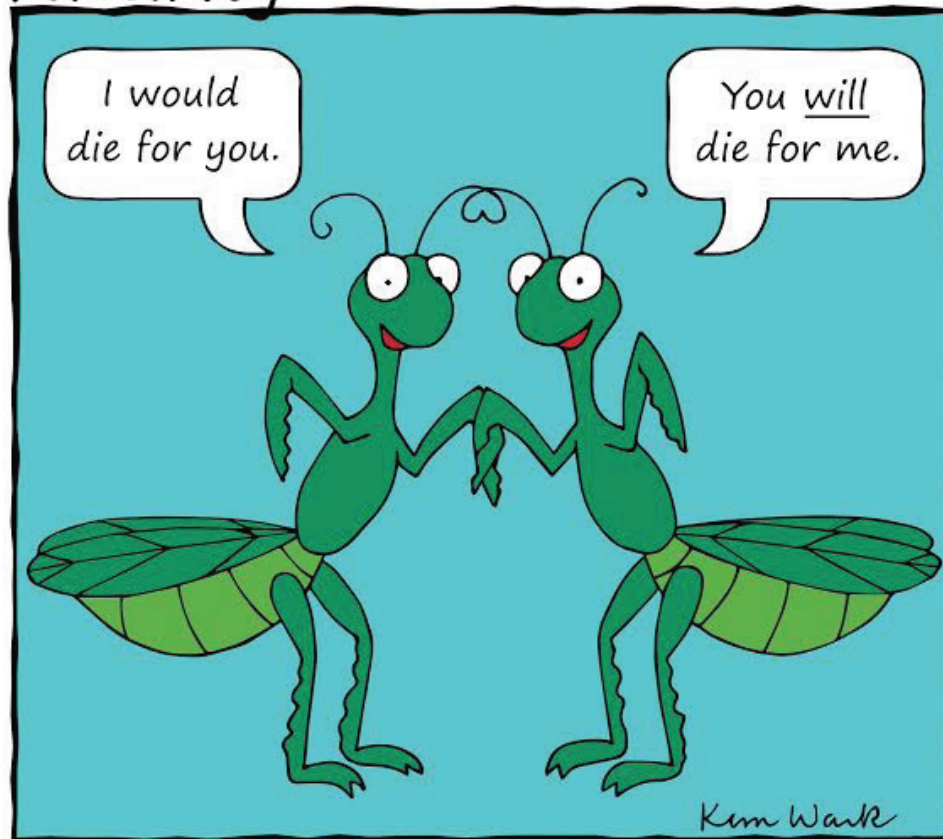
While it had been hoped to have the bylaw, whatever its final form, in place by this summer, the process around hiring a consulting firm and allowing it to do its work means that timeframe is probably out the proverbial window.

An increasing number of blue-green algae blooms popping up in the county is real, and the decline of lake health in the county is real. Therefore, there is some race against time in all of this. The hiring of a consultant will of course also make the process more expensive than the largely in-house one that had been occurring.

All that said, the process that was in place has been halted, which should mean everyone can put away the pitchforks and torches.

**CHAD INGRAM**
Editor

Kwarky

*A lesson in love and grammar.*

Always worry

THE OTHER day I was watching a social media post put out by a fellow who was doing a three-part video of himself chopping kindling for the woodstove. This is one of the horrific side effects of COVID-19 that medical science might never fully address.

In that video, the fellow was chopping away at breakneck speed. It was almost as if he had to make up for time he lost setting up the camera and lighting.

This might come as a surprise, but I am not a fan of kindling-making videos. Even so, I could not help but get caught up in the suspense of it all. Because, frankly, I was curious as to whether he was going to lose a finger and the second or third video.

You see, he was steadying the wood with his fingers almost directly beneath the trajectory of the swing while, at the same time, violently smacking the boards with a fairly light hatchet and talking to the camera.

The only thing between his fingers and those barely controlled strokes was a few inches of straight-grained softwood and a large amount of luck.

Apparently, I wasn't the only one watching this in horror. Another person commented on the fact that he nearly hit his fingers twice.

To which the fellow in the post replied with words to the effect of, "Don't worry dude! I have lots of time in with the hatchet!"

As an outdoorsman from the pre-dude era, I will point out there are several things wrong with that answer.

First of all, if you use the word "dude" in a sentence, you probably don't have

enough time in yet – with anything. More than that, if you had enough time in you would realize that no matter how long you have used a hatchet, or any other dangerous edged tool, you tempt fate by suggesting that an accident is out of the realm of possibility. That possibility is always there. And it's the reason why you should never let your guard down or work distracted.

Thankfully, this video didn't end tragically, and no fingers were lost in the making.

I'm still not sure what the purpose of the post was, however. It's not like splitting kindling with a hatchet is a new thing or even remotely exciting. The only thing that would make a post like that go viral is a mistake.

Nor was there anything instructional about it – except perhaps as an exercise demonstrating what not to do. In fact, he got far too close for my liking to the video transitioning to an instructional post about how to dial 911 with just one hand.

I know a woman who used to work in an ER unit in a big hospital and she once told me that the two biggest causes of wood-pile-related accidents were a chainsaw and a hatchet. Outdoors instructors will also tell you that the hatchet is one of the tools that is most dangerous in the hands of a careless or distracted person. I think most outdoors people have had their close calls with one. The smart ones learn from the experience.

The good news is no hospital visit was required in that instance. Because when you get there the only comforting thing someone can say to you is, "Don't worry dude. The doctor has plenty of time in with sutures."

**STEVE GALEA**
Beyond 35

IN OTHER WORDS

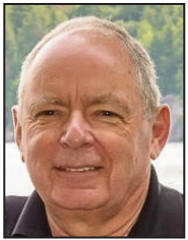
Columns and Letters to the Editor

Feeling sorry for the fox

THE PAW PRINTS in the snow make me sad. They go in a straight line, heading nowhere in particular, yet seemingly heading everywhere.

They enter a hilltop copse of young maples, then descend into a small clearing at the edge of a dense spruce bog. The stride of the track shortens, indicating a pause to reconnoiter, then carries on into the dark thickness.

I have no intention of following. It is hard work walking through the snow and the farther I follow the tracks the sadder I become.



JIM POLING SR.
From Shaman's Rock

I'm saddened because the tracks are those of a red fox, probably a vixen searching for food the night before. The tracks hold no evidence that she has found any.

I've seen the vixen from a distance on a couple of occasions this winter and she looks gaunt from hunger. Following her tracks in the snow tells me how far she has to travel, consuming precious energy, just to find a morsel.

I feel sorry for her but suppress the urge to leave food out for her. Feeding the fox could make her dependent on handouts and diminish her desire to hunt on her own.

And looking hungry does not mean a fox is starving. It might have an empty, growling stomach but that likely will not last for long.

Foxes typically eat 0.5 to one kilogram of food a day. They are superbly equipped to find and catch it.

They have an acute sense of hearing and smell. Researchers have observed foxes detecting an egg 50 centimeters (almost two feet) away and buried under three centimeters (roughly one inch) of sand.

Also, foxes are omnivores and therefore have a wide choice of foods. They'll eat mice, worms, insect larvae, grubs, carrion, and plant material, especially fruits.

Their hunting skills are legendary and are backed by extreme cunning and some science.

New Scientist magazine reported some years back that foxes use earth's magnetic field to hunt. Some other creatures – birds and sharks – also have a 'magnetic sense' but foxes are the only critters known to use that sense for catching prey.

The magazine reported that the fox sees earth's magnetic field as a ring of shadow. The shadow darkens as a fox's eyes look toward magnetic north.

The fox can hear a mouse moving under a metre of snow but does not know precisely how far away it is. However, as the shadow on the fox's eyes lines up with the sound of the mouse, they tell the fox the exact location and it pounces through the snow, pinning the mouse with its paws.

Cunning is another large part of keeping the fox from starvation. It's an imaginative type of cunning that allows the fox to solve a problem when trying to catch prey.

There is the famous story, apparently based on truthful observation, of a fox bringing a stick to the edge of a pond where ducks are swimming. The fox plays with the stick, tossing it about in full view of the ducks who become curious about its behaviour.

The fox tires of its game, drops the stick by the shore and wanders off into some reeds. The ducks are curious and come ashore to check out the stick. Then, zap! The fox jumps up out from the reeds and grabs a duck.

There is another story of a Canadian biologist watching a fox charging a feeding squirrel which escapes by running into its tunnel entrance. Not long after, the squirrel emerges from the tunnel's exit hole nearby, resumes feeding but is charged again by the fox. It again escapes by running back into the tunnel entrance.

This happens three times but when the squirrel escapes back into the entrance tunnel the fox goes instead to the exit tunnel, waits with its mouth open and grabs the squirrel as it comes out to resume feeding.

When I think about all the skills, tools and cunning a fox has for getting food I feel less sad.

Still, those paw prints trailing endlessly through the snow make me appreciate how long and hard that vixen works to keep food in her belly, and the beliefs of any family she might have back in her den.

Self-awareness

I JUST FINISHED reading Parker Palmer's book *On the Brink of Everything*. This is one of the many great books I've read on being in the moment and developing/maintaining self-awareness. I'd like to think that much of the knowledge I've gained has stuck.

The Oxford Dictionary defines self-awareness as: "conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires." Self-awareness is one of those work in progress types of challenges. It's something that you get better at but you never reach a finish line. That's likely the first rule of self-awareness development. The second rule is that you have to be okay with the truth no matter how ugly it gets. The third rule is "no pain, no gain."

The question is "why bother?" Why is it important to stare in the proverbial mirror? Speaking from experience I say, with confidence, that it does make living life so much fuller. In addition to reading the books I've been writing. I write three pages every morning (an exercise from *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron) and I've been at it for 2011 days without fail. For a period of time I also meditated on a daily basis. I have also spent time working with a therapist. I mention these three activities because Mr. Palmer mentions them in his book as "tried-and-true aids" to getting to know

oneself. He goes on to talk about three other methods that he has found to be even more helpful, and they are:

- Connecting with a younger generation; not to advise them, but to learn from them
- Move toward what you fear. You know that saying "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger"
- Spend time in nature

When I read this advice I was thrilled that

I had already been participating in activities that involved these three things. I'm a little weak on the "fear" one but the others I have happening on a regular basis. My youngest friend is seven months old and I learn from her every single visit.

I believe that joyful moments are happening all of the time. The trick is that we have to be grounded in our emotions to recognize them before

they pass on by. I'm grateful to say that I spend so much more time being grateful than I ever have. The work is paying off big time. When it comes to mental and emotional health, becoming self-aware is the best investment you can make.

Something to think about.

Laurie Sweig is a certified personal fitness trainer and spinning instructor. She owns and operates The Point for Fitness. She can be reached at laurie@thepointforfitness.com.



LAURIE SWEIG
Practical Fitness

High school students asked to confirm self-screening

Beginning Feb. 10, at the beginning of class each day, all secondary students will be required to provide verbal confirmation that they have self-screened for COVID-19 that morning prior to attending school.

On Feb. 8, the Trillium Lakelands District School Board sent a letter to parents and guardians of secondary students to announce the new screening measures taking place in high schools throughout the board's district.

Students must declare that they have passed the Ministry of Health's Ontario COVID-19 self assessment tool requirements, available at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>.

ca/school-screening/.

"If a student responds no to either of these questions, they will be sent to the school office and a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up their child," reads the message from the school board, which noted the new policy is based on the Ministry of Education's new self-screening measures.

For further information on the TLDSB Daily Health Assessment visit tldsbc.ca/returntoschool, or contact your child's school.

~ Times Staff

HCPL's DVD of the Month - February



Tenet with John David Washington

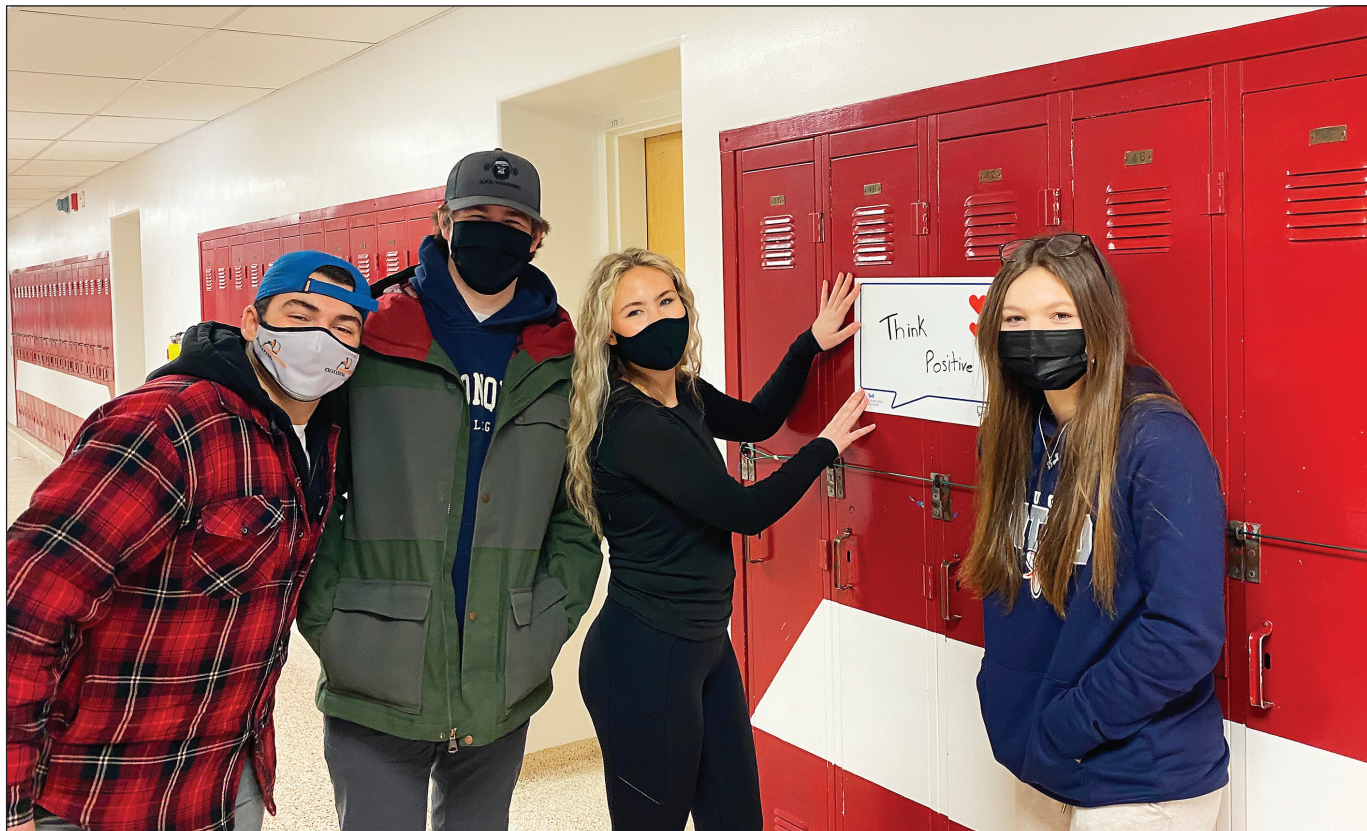
In this time twisting, action packed film, actor John David Washington plays a secret agent, known only as 'The Protagonist,' who is sent back through time into a twilight world of intrigue and international espionage to prevent a catastrophic attack from the future which threatens to annihilate the present world as we know it. To accomplish this herculean task, he is given just one thing. A single word. Tenet. To be successful, he must learn to trust himself, manipulate the flow of time, and bend the laws of nature.

If you enjoy a deep thinker, this one's for you! An exhilarating and mind-boggling movie full of deep and complex concepts that will leave your emotions reeling, and your brain still working to unravel them long after the credits have rolled.

Check out *Tenet* from Haliburton County Public Library today.

Hawks show support

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School leadership students Stefan Salaris, from left, Cole Prentice, Summer Clark and Olivia Villamere, who are all from the same cohort, were part of an effort to make and post signs with messages of support and suggestions for mental health on Jan. 28 to coincide with Bell Let's Talk Day. Bell Let's Talk Day is a national campaign to help with raising awareness and offering words of support through social media for those struggling with mental health, which is further supported by Bell Canada from their financial donations to mental health initiatives. At the school, posting the signs in the hallways was started by the leadership class taught by Paul Longo. Vice-principal Jenn Mills wrote, "It shows that great conversations are happening in classrooms and hallways to help break the stigma!" Mills added the school and the TLDSB "have a number of initiatives throughout the year to support student and staff mental health and well being and also to destigmatize mental illness, for example Children's Mental Health Week in May. / Submitted by Jenn Mills.



Reliable internet access 'critical part of life'

from page 5

missing a week's worth of classes. Online learning is not doable for a lot of people," Klose stated.

In order to finish her Grade 11 year, Klose temporarily moved to Kingston to live with her older sister, who had access to quality internet. Now, she's back in Haliburton to complete her Grade 12 year inside the classroom.

Dr. Michael MacKenzie, a professor at Montreal's McGill University, was born and raised in Haliburton. When he heard about Cox's initiative, he jumped at the chance to get involved.

"A big part of my work at McGill looks at inequalities and opportunities for younger people and their families, and this just stood out for me. We have lots of families in the county with varying levels of internet access," MacKenzie said. "The promise of the internet is it provides opportunities to kids who otherwise wouldn't have access to them. If we have a service like that that is open to some but not others... it doesn't eliminate disparities, instead it becomes part of deepening and solidifying those divides."

MacKenzie said that access to reliable internet could be seen as a human rights issue in today's day.

"This isn't something that's just nice to get for people in rural and remote areas. This is a critical part of life. The children of this county are being locked out of opportunities to improve their life," MacKenzie said.

While he's a fan of Cox's short-term solution of supplying cell phones with data plans to those in desperate need, MacKenzie said longer-term solutions are required. The installation of fibre optic lines and construction of signal towers would be an expensive endeavour, one that would require significant investment from both the provincial and federal governments. He believes there may be opportunities too, to look to emerging technologies such as lower orbit satellites to alleviate the issue.

"I think we need to accept that a one-size-fits-all solution probably isn't going to work here. I hope the feds and the province come to the table with resources to get a mix of solutions that work and help to make internet connectivity a possibility for all residents of Haliburton County," MacKenzie said.

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Nancy McElwain was the first Highland Wood long-term care resident to receive the Moderna vaccine on Feb. 8. Sue Long, Highland Wood nurse, administered the vaccination, while HHHS president and CEO Carolyn Plummer looked on. /Submitted

Highland Wood residents receive COVID-19 vaccines

Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) is pleased to share that residents of Highland Wood long-term care are receiving the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on Feb. 8.

The first resident to receive the vaccine was Nancy McElwain, who was an ICU nurse during her career in health care. She was known for her dedication to her patients during her career, and as a resident at Highland Wood long-term care, she continues to watch over the nursing staff daily to ensure they are doing a good job.

HHHS is hopeful that residents of Hyland Crest long-term care facility will receive their vaccines later this week and will communicate with families of residents once a specific date is known.

The HHHS team is also continuing to work on vaccination processes for healthcare workers, as well as working with community partners on broader community immunization strategies.

Submitted by HHHS

Secret Samaritan

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on our community.

People are struggling to make ends meet.

Haliburton County's media have joined forces to launch the Secret Samaritan initiative. If you know of an individual, a family, or a business owner that has fallen upon hard times, now is the time to offer a helping hand.

We are encouraging those who have the means to do so to spare a thought for their neighbours and favourite businesses.

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Save lives.



Photo feature

Take a look inside Minden's new recreation complex with *Minden Times* photographer Darren Lum, who was invited for a sneak peek tour last week by Minden Hills community services director, Craig Belfry. See images from pages 10 to 12.

Minden Hills community services director, Craig Belfry, said there are only a few things left to complete the Minden arena such as the pickleball lines for the four courts at the full size gym. This gym also includes a drop screen, which not only divides the gym in two sections, but can also be used as a projection screen for viewing movies.



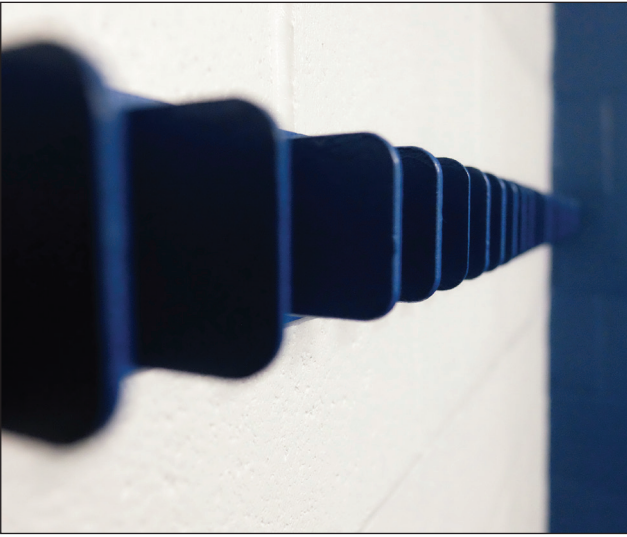
The close-to-completed Minden arena is expected to be open in June.



Craig Belfry shows the seating area, where there is space for 300 people. The arena has state of the art ice-making equipment and has six dressing rooms.



Craig Belfry, Minden Hills community services director, walks along the walking/running track on the second floor, located above the gym at the Minden arena.



Among the details included in the new Minden arena are stick holders located in the dressing rooms.



The view from the viewing area, as seen during a sneak preview tour led by Craig Belfry.



The stairwell from the main entrance area leads up to the second floor of the Minden recreation complex, expected to open in June.

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Photo feature



Above, Craig Belfry walks down the hall beside the gym where the facility's lockers are located.



Above, the scoreboard from the S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena will continue to be used for years to come, as it hangs on the wall above the rink at the new Minden arena.

Left, the new arena includes four water hydration stations, which allow for the refilling of large water bottles.

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1								

Level: intermediate

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 14

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Talk with the Doc

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Dr. Ian Gemmill
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1:00 to 2:00 pm

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- Vaccine rollout plans
- Pandemic response

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HALIBURTON, KAWARTHA,
PINE RIDGE DISTRICT
HEALTH UNIT

MOH says most of the nine LTC outbreaks are 'situations'

by SUE TIFFIN
Times Staff

As of last Wednesday, the public health unit was responding to nine outbreaks at long-term care homes, including one at Hyland Crest in Minden where two essential caregivers tested positive.

Gemmill said of the more than 140 cases that had been reported in the health unit's region over the past two weeks – at the time of last Wednesday's press conference – more than half of the cases were associated with outbreaks, and over half of those outbreak cases were associated with a testing campaign conducted at one of the long-term care homes.

"We call them outbreaks because that is what the province of Ontario has defined them as, and that is one person or more ... whether they have symptoms or not, testing positive for coronavirus," said Gemmill. "And in fact of those nine, I'll call them situations, two of them are truly outbreaks that have affected a number of the residents and staff for which we are doing regular re-testing, we are ensuring that all of the infection control procedures are in place to try to bring these to a halt."

Two long-term care facilities in the region were dealing with "more significant situations," those being Caressant Care long-term care home on McLaughlin Road in Lindsay, and Hope Street Terrace in Port Hope.

"I will be honest with you, and tell you that my experience working in other parts of Ontario, is that one of the characteristics of these outbreaks with coronavirus, despite best efforts of all involved – and I mean, really, this is hugely stressful work for the staff who work in [a facility in] outbreak – that they tend to drag on. It just seems to be something we're observing all over the place."

At Hyland Crest, as of press time, all residents and staff had tested negative for COVID-19 after two essential caregivers – visitors, limited to two, designated by residents or family to help provide care during the pandemic – tested positive on Jan. 31. The outbreak is the first to occur in Haliburton County since the pandemic began last March.

"The Hyland Crest situation is one of the situations which I would describe as a situation, as opposed to an outbreak," said Gemmill. "We're instructed to call them outbreaks and treat them like outbreaks, and to get all the infection control in place, but what we have there ... is two, what we call essential care visitors, those are people nominated by the family to come in and assist with the care. We've got two of those people who have tested positive but neither of them has any symptoms."

The essential caregivers were tested as part of routine testing for anyone entering a long-term care facility.

"We know that in some places, people with no symptoms have been responsible for spreading the virus and so we cannot take any chances. Even if they're false positive tests, we can't take any chances. So that's why we're treating it like an outbreak, even though we only have two people, neither of whom is ill, in that setting."

The caregivers who tested positive are in isolation, but the long-term care centre is still open to other essential caregivers who are providing care to residents.

"I personally think that's quite a reasonable thing to allow an exemption [from stay-at-home orders] for," said Gemmill. "I think staying at home ... I'm a big fan of it, but here's a situation where they're being tested. The idea of stay-at-home is that you go from home, to where you need to go, and then you go home, and that's what I understand essential caregivers will be doing as well. They're not going out to the pub afterwards, they're going from home, to provide the care at the long-term care home and then back home to reduce the

risk not only to themselves but also the people they're looking after."

Stay-at-home orders reducing both influenza and COVID-19 cases

Gemmill said cases in Ontario had gone from close to 4,000 per day a couple of weeks ago to fewer than 2,000 last week, while cases locally had dropped to 10 or fewer per day.

Additionally, he said influenza cases are at an all-time low – by Jan. 22, he said, just 55 cases were being reported Canada-wide, while normally there would be thousands.

While some people have suggested, Gemmill said, that the reduction in influenza is due to the COVID-19 and influenza viruses competing – an interesting hypothesis, he noted – less international travel and the personal measures people are taking.

see VARIANT page 14

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by **SUE TIFFIN**
Times Staff



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If you require assistance with the application process please contact Andrea Bull, Human Resources Manager at 705-286-1333 or at abull@county.haliburton.on.ca

The application process will close on February 15, 2021.



Township of Algonquin Highlands

NOTICE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS 2021 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

NOTE: As a result of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak, as well as the requirements for social distancing, Council Meetings will be conducted electronically via web conference until further notice.

TAKE NOTICE that Council will begin its 2021 budget deliberations during a **Special Meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021** commencing at 9:00 a.m. conducted electronically via web conference.

Council will continue its 2021 budget deliberations during a **Special Meeting on Tuesday, February 23, 2021** commencing at 9:00 a.m. conducted electronically via web conference.

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link. The live-stream link can be found in the Council Meeting Notice posted on the Township's website under the News and Notices at www.algonquinhighlands.ca

Dated this 10th day of February, 2021.

Dawn Newhook, Municipal Clerk
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1J1
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OneHSN.com/KawarthaLakes
to find out more or to register.

A few years back, researchers in southwest England invited a group of people aged 60 to 99 at a supported living retirement complex to interact with eight different toys, each of them at a separate station. As participants moved around the room engaging with the toys, which included lifelike robotic companions designed to look like a seal, a dog and a cat, as well as less interactive toys like a plastic dinosaur and a knitted hedgehog, researchers filmed the activity and later led the seniors in a group discussion and debrief of their experiences.

Amongst the 17 participants, more than half most preferred their time spent with the toys that were familiar, soft, interactive and lifelike, choosing as their favourite the cat, followed by the dog – robotic companion toys that were created under the Hasbro name and are quickly becoming a common support in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

It's a study that drew the attention of Lynda Williams, a Haliburton resident who is studying for her second degree during her retirement and, in her downtime, organizing an online fundraiser to help purchase 25 Joy for All cats for local long-term care homes.

"It's just awesome how these things work," said Williams. "They're so interactive, it's really quite amazing."

Williams was a teacher at J.Douglas Hodgson, though at the time of her teaching career which began when she was 19, it wasn't yet necessary to have a degree.

"I always thought, I'd really love to go to university," she said. "Once I hit 60, I thought, I'd really love to go to university."

After doing some research, Williams found that two univer-

see COMPANION page 15

Variants not yet identified in Haliburton County

from page 13

ing in wearing masks and not gathering also play a factor.

"But also, I'm going to suggest, in addition to that, some of the restrictive measures such as the lockdown and particularly the stay at home order – because it's been since the stay-at-home order we've seen some of these reductions," he said. "So what's actually happening then? My belief is that the restrictions are working and it's especially these stay-at-home orders – and I'm a very strong supporter of them – I'll go on the record as saying that because I think what it does is send the message out there that we're not to gather. We are seeing the flow being stopped up as the virus cannot circulate without that human-to-human contact."

Gemmill uses an analogy of a flowing garden hose, with stay-at-home orders and other restrictions acting as a sort of thumb over the hose to stop the spread of illness.

"We all know that even though they're making a difference, once we relax the restrictions the case counts will rebound," he said. "Thumb off the hose, it will all start all over again, and that's because there's so many susceptible people out there. I think it's a message we can get out to the population that we have these restrictions in place because we want to keep the numbers down so that people can get a vaccine when we've got it available, and I hope that's not in too many weeks from now."

Gemmill hopes that when it is available, as many residents as possible choose to get a vaccine, hoping that a more normal life can be in place by this fall. While it has been delayed, he said a committee has been struck to ensure that when the vaccine is more readily available, it will be ready for the health unit region's residents.

"These restrictions, can they go on forever? I think they're helpful at the moment, I think they might be unsustainable a year from now. Do we want to be doing this same thing? I don't think so. There's a need to get back to normal."

Playdates and sleepovers not essential

Brick and mortar schools reopened locally to staff and students on Jan. 25, with additional health and safety measures including mask-wearing during recess and breaks, and an ask from the school board that people not congregate before and after school. When asked for clarification on that ask, specifically in regards to playdates and sleepovers, Gemmill said they're best avoided.

"The way I would characterize it is, at schools there is some element of control over the type of interaction between students," said Gemmill. "Yes, they're in the same classroom, but there is a semblance of order I think, in how kids interact and so it's not zero, [but] I think it's lower than it might be say for example, [for kids getting together for a sleepover.]"

Gemmill has said that confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools have remained low, but it is not clear if that is because students are less likely to contract the virus, or if they are asymptomatic. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in kids who physically attend school were not associated with continued transmission within the school, he has said, and spread has been controlled there.

"To me, the stay-at-home order is stay at home unless there's an essential reason to leave, and that is essential work that some people do, whether it's public transportation or healthcare or groceries or [essential caregivers] or whatever it is, but I consider education of children to be amongst those essential reasons ... if you're not leaving home for those reasons, you shouldn't be leaving home. And so yes, I think go-

ing to school is an essential reason, but going for a sleepover is not. That's still part of stay-at-home."

Variants not yet identified in Haliburton County or health unit region

In response to a question from media about coronavirus variants and whether or not Gemmill is concerned about their spread, he noted: "the answer is, we have to be."

Currently, the variants have not been identified in the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district.

"We've seen what happened in Italy in March and April, we saw what happened in the UK, in New York, and now as I understand it, California," he said. "There seem to be some strains of this virus that seem to be able to race through institutions and congregate living homes causing a huge number of cases and sometimes mortality as well."

A recent report showed more than 5 per cent of positive COVID-19 cases collected in a study last month tested positive for B.1.1.7 or B.1.353 variants, which are considered to be more highly infectious, with the majority of those positive tests being reported in the Simcoe-Muskoka public health unit, 85 of them linked to the Roberta Place long-term care home outbreak in Barrie.

"I certainly don't envy anybody who is dealing with the outbreak in Barrie," said Gemmill. "It's heartbreaking. It's heartbreaking, I know, for the families of course but it's also certainly heartbreaking for the people who are responsible for their care, staff and the public health people working there. We don't want that to happen."

In any outbreak that occurs, at least one of the proved positive specimens will be run for screening for the variants, including in the HKPRD health unit region. Gemmill noted that some experts are predicting a variant will replace the less transmissible stream and will become the predominant stream, so he said our own local health unit has to be watching for it.

"Is it only a matter of time?," asked Gemmill. "Well, possibly, if we can keep the restrictions in place, maybe we'll be lucky. I'm a realist as well as sometimes an optimist. I think that it could be only a matter of time, depending on how quickly we can get people protected [through vaccine]."

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2	9	3	7	8	4	1	6	5
1	5	4	3	6	2	7	9	8

Companion animals help calm, comfort

from page 14

sities in Ontario waived the tuition fees for seniors and so found herself in her 60s earning her first degree – in religious studies with a minor in women's studies – in 2015. When she found out that four-year degrees were being offered online, she enrolled again, and is currently studying a major of gerontology with a minor in Indigenous studies.

"This will be my second degree through Laurentian [University] because I wanted an honour," she said. "Because who knows, I might go on to my Master's, I'm not sure. That's kind of the hope."

Williams, who is 70 and whose mom is 93, said gerontology was of interest to her in part because of the conversation toward looking at how aging well and living in a congregated living setting can be done "in a different way, in a more gentle way, in a more inclusive way," to allow for autonomy for seniors as they age.

As she studied, she became interested in research done on the positive effects of robotic animals – most of it recent, conducted in the past decade or so.

"At the beginning they were using them mostly for dementia patients but now they're finding how good they are just for anybody," she said. "I've seen them in person, so I know if you touch here, it looks at you, if you touch somewhere else, it'll roll over because it wants its belly rubbed, and it will meow. It's fairly good that way, even when you just see it, and it feels really nice, which is a big change from what there used to be ... Because of how they're lifelike, how they look lifelike, they feel lifelike, and what they do is lifelike."

While our local long-term care facilities do have access to some robocats, Williams said she wanted to ensure there would be enough animated companion pets to help those who are most feeling the effects of isolation and loneliness during the pandemic citing research that suggested people felt "a sense of calm or comfort as a result of holding, hugging or affectionate interacting with this pet," and "improving in mood, a calming influence." She found an Ontario supplier, and worked out details, including a small discount for the bulk purchase - Williams's goal is to bring 10 each of the Joy for All creatures to Extendicare and Hyland Crest, and five to Highland Wood. But at \$250, plus tax and shipping, per robocat, she began reaching out to the community for support through a GoFundMe page, hoping to raise \$5,500 to cover the cost of purchase and shipping of



Robotic companion cats are soft, lifelike, and respond to touch and interaction. Haliburton resident Lynda Williams hopes to bring 25 of the cats to local long-term care homes. / Submitted photo

the "furry, fantastic, meowing and purring robocats."

The companion animals can be washed and sanitized, and Williams said the cats might help the residents who receive less phone calls and visits than others, until all residents are vaccinated and they can be shared more freely.

But it's not just because of the pandemic that Williams has launched the robocats campaign – she said once she did the research and found out how valuable the animatronic animals are to the elderly, she felt compelled to bring them to those in need of some extra comfort. It's long been her nature to help – as a teacher, she tried to support students in need, and appreciates community fundraisers like service club road tolls.

"We're a small community and if we don't support the needs of our community, who is going to?," she asked.

The fundraising campaign to help bring animated companion pets to local long-term care homes began last week, with help sorting out the online fundraiser from Williams's daughter, Heather.

"Share with your friends, put it on your Facebook if you feel comfortable doing so, please get the word out there, thank you very much for anyone who donates," said Williams. "I'm truly thankful for any amount, because pennies make dollars, and dollars keep going."

For more information or to donate, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/life-like-Cuddly-cat-Companions-for-LTC-residents>.



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Township of Algonquin Highlands requires an Administrative Assistant
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The Township of Algonquin Highlands is seeking to fill a 14 month maternity leave vacancy for the position of Administrative Assistant. Reporting to the Treasurer, the Administrative Assistant provides effective and efficient administrative support and assistance to the Treasurer, Clerk, Fire Chief and Operations Manager.

Visit our website at: www.algonquinhighlands.ca for the full job description.

Please submit your resume and cover letter by **3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 26, 2021** to:

Dawn Mugford-Guay,
Human Resources Coordinator
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1J1
Email: dmugfordguay@algonquinhighlands.ca

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Physiotherapist

Haliburton Highlands Health Services has an exciting, permanent opportunity available as a member of the Long Term Care home teams that serve a substantial area surrounding both Haliburton and Minden. HHHS includes LTC homes in both Minden (Hyland Crest) and Haliburton (Hyland Wood).

This casual physiotherapist will report to and work in collaboration with the LTC home, Directors of Care. The Physiotherapist helps our residents reach optimal function by developing, implementing and supporting established treatment programs. He supervises our Physiotherapy Aides and provides oversight to them, providing guidance and counseling on therapeutic issues. Changes or progressions in treatment are made based on ongoing assessments and evaluation.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The successful candidate will possess a degree/diploma in Physiotherapy and be registered with the Board of Directors of Physiotherapy to practice in Ontario. The preferred candidate will have working knowledge of rehabilitation, orthopedics, and neurology. Membership in the Canadian Physiotherapy Association is recommended. Current CPR certification is also a requirement. Two to four years of experience in Long Term Care and/or Acute Care settings is preferred.

SUBMIT APPLICATION AND RESUME TO: Human Resources
Haliburton Highlands Health Services
Box 115, Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0
E-mail: hr@hhhs.ca
Fax: 705-457-4609

PLEASE QUOTE JOB NUMBER: 2021 - 05

Haliburton Highlands Health Services thanks all applicants, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. If you are contacted by HHHS regarding a job opportunity or testing, please advise if you require accommodation. Information received relating to accommodation needs of applicants will be addressed confidentially.

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Haliburton Highlands Health Services has a need for Temporary Full-Time and Temporary Part-Time staff for the noted classifications below.

RN's and RPN's are expected to be available for both Minden and Haliburton Hospital locations. In addition, opportunities are available in our two Long Term Care facilities, Hyland Wood and Hyland Crest. The **Registered Nurse** earns \$33.56 /hr - \$48.05/hr and is responsible for providing comprehensive care to patients, with predictable and unpredictable outcomes who may or may not be clinically stable. The successful candidate will possess a diploma/degree in Nursing and a current Certificate of Competence from the College of Nurses of Ontario. Two years of acute care practice is required; previous emergency department or specialty department experience of 1 year or more is preferred. Recent experience is preferred.

Registered Practical Nurses earn \$30.58 - \$31.17/hr and provide client care in accordance with the Professional Standards of the College of Nurses of Ontario. She or he, as a member of the health care team, has a significant role in promoting health, preventing illness, and helping clients attain and maintain the highest level of health possible in situations in which a client's condition is relatively stable, less complex and the outcomes of care are predictable. RPN's must have a diploma in Nursing, a Current Certificate of Competence from the College of Nurses of Ontario, current BCLS. Must have a demonstrated knowledge of RPN scope of practice, excellent organization and prioritization skills and an ability to fully communicate in English.

Personnel Support Workers earn \$22.25- \$24.85/hr and provide resident care in relation to activities of daily living. PSW's help residents attain and maintain the highest level of health possible in situations in which a resident's condition is relatively stable, less complex and the outcomes of care are predictable. Successful completion of Personal Support Worker program which meets one of the following:

The vocational standards established by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities,
The standards established by the National Association of Career Colleges, or
The standards established by the Ontario Community Support Association; and
Must be a minimum of 600 hours in duration, counting both class time and practical experience.

The **Caregiver Support Aide** earns \$18.50/hr. S/he provides support to our PSW's in relation to specific activities of resident and patient daily living, quality of life, environment management and continuous communication. Assists our PSW's with dressing, meal service and nourishment, assists with personal grooming, changing linens etc. Registered graduate of grade 12 or equivalent maturity and experience, with a willingness to register in a PSW certificate program and complete it within three years.

Observers/screeners earn \$14.50/hr and work on an as needed basis in 4 hour, 8 hour, or 12 hour shifts depending on Patient/Resident needs. The Observer is an unregulated health care provider who is primarily responsible for the close observation of patients whose behavior poses a risk to his/her safety or the safety of others. The Patients/Residents you are observing are often elderly people who are living with dementia or other conditions that impact their memory and judgment. As a Screener, you act as a greeter and screener at facility entrances in Minden and Haliburton locations, to ensure anyone who enters is well. Minimum Grade 11, or equivalent, from the Ministry of Education (Ontario) with a demonstrated working knowledge of spoken and written English and experience working in a health care setting, security, related social service, or educational field will be an asset.

There may be many who have worked related fields and training on site will provide the basics you require for a temporary role.

Interested: Submit your application and resume to:
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Raymond "Ray" Sisson
(Resident of Haliburton)

Peacefully at Highland Wood Nursing Home in Haliburton on Tuesday evening, February 2, 2021 in his 98th year. Beloved husband of Norma Sisson (nee Hague). Loving father of Kristine (Ila) Sisson, Karlene Cooney, Neilson (Judy) and Darren (Debby).

Fondly remembered by his grandchildren Andresa, Sascha, Aleatha, Bryan (Kim), David (Nancy), Donna, Jaiden and his great grandchildren Lotus, Phoenix, Quest, Eros, Sydney, Makenzy, Riley, Alex, Zoe and by his great great grandchildren Noah and Madelyn. Predeceased by his brothers Andy, Brant, Carl, Calvin, Holly, Max, Don and by his sisters Ina, Ida (Sarah), May, Vivian and their spouses and by his daughter Carla Jane in infancy. Also lovingly remembered by many nieces and nephews. Ray worked in Hay & Co Lumber Mill in Kennis Lake and the Cooperage in Eagle Lake. For many years we worked with with Ronald S. Sisson Builders as a carpenter and as a farmer for many years. He loved his trips to the Yukon, eating at the Mandarin and gardening. Ray would talk to anyone and would always make time for others.



Private Visitation & Graveside Service

A Private Visitation & Graveside Service will take place. Interment St. Peter's Anglican Church Cemetery, Maple Lake in the Spring. As an expression of sympathy, donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation - Highland Wood Resident's Council would be appreciated by the family. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME** 13523 Hwy. #118, Haliburton, Ontario (705) 457-9209.

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650 OBITUARIES

650 OBITUARIES





BALCOMBE, Alfred Wayne

Peacefully at Ross Memorial Hospital on Wednesday, February 3, 2020 at the age of 68 after his second courageous battle with Cancer, beating it the first time in 2010.

Beloved husband of Alice (nee Terry). Loving father of Nadine (Mark), Timothy (Amy) and Jeffrey (Sarah). Proud grandfather of Courtney, Cassidy, Cayden, Atticus and a granddaughter on the way. Alfred will be sadly missed by his siblings Brian (Janice), Marj Steele (Garry), Judy Peel (Ron), Jimmy (Michelle) and brother in law David Loshaw (Becky). He will be fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews, aunts and uncles. Alfred was a 30 year lineman with Ontario Hydro, starting his career in Barrie, working throughout the Georgian Bay area and eventually retiring out of Minden. Post retirement he went on to work 8 years with the Georgina Bay travelling crew. He will be sadly missed by many work mates.

In light of the current public health situation, cremation has taken place and a celebration of life will be held when it is safe to do so. In memory of Alfred, donations to the Ross Memorial Hospital-Palliative care unit or the Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated by the family. Online condolences may be expressed at www.lakelandfuneralcentre.com



In Loving Memory of

Donna Marie Johnson (nee Matheson)


Passed away peacefully at Hyland Crest Senior Citizens Home, Minden on Wednesday, February 3, 2021, in her 92nd year.

Donna is predeceased by her husband and the love of her life Les and is also predeceased by her 2nd husband Cecil. Dear mother of Diane and David Dollo, Wayne and Judy Johnson. Loving nana of Kelli (Michael), Jaime (Sonja), Nicki (Lawrence), Sarah (Wade), Mitch (Karen), great nana of Connor, Shae, Noah, Max, Nikolas, Benn, Alexius, Ty, Sofie, Jace, Jade, Jaz, Mackenzie, Wyatt and Miles. Sister of the late Christine, Jean and George. Fondly remembered by her nieces, nephews, family and friends.

The family would like to thank the staff at Hyland Crest for the loving wonderful care they have provided for Donna for many years.

It was Donna's wish for cremation and Private Family Arrangements.

Memorial Donations to the Haliburton Highland Health Services Foundation – for the Hyland Crest Residents Council or the Minden Food Bank would be appreciated by the family and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.



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Monday, February 2, 1998

Near-perfect conditions

Mushers draw thousands to Minden Derby

It was a perfect weekend for racing according to the Race Governor of the Minden Sled Dog Derby Val Loughheed. She was commenting following the close of the fourteenth annual Minden Techni-Cal Challenge Sunday afternoon, February 1.

"The weather was ideal, the trail conditions were next to perfect, the spectators came out in droves and the best mushers in north America came to Minden. I couldn't have asked for anything more," Loughheed said.

Her comments were repeated by mushers and many of the thousands of visitors who converged on Minden. "This has always been my favourite race," a veteran musher said. "The trail is a tough one, but the welcome and organization is second to none." Many of the spectators repeated those sentiments.

The top spot in the eight dog competition went to Pierre Thibadeau of St. Georges, Quebec. He managed to shave one minute and twenty seconds off his Saturday time of 29:35.20 to claim the first place prize with an overall run of 57:44.47. The eight dog teams run eight miles each day with the two day total determining the winner. In second spot was Arleigh Reynolds of Spencer, New York who covered the 16 mile distance in 58:36.61. Third place went to John Samburg of Paul Smiths,

New York at 59:04.94. Minden racer, and a member of the organizing committee, Steve Loughheed, placed ninth with a time of 1:00:50.76.

World champion musher Lou Serre of Markstay, Ontario led the four dog class

with a combined two day total of 30:32.17. The four dog teams run four miles in each of the two heats. Gary Callahan of Madison, Ohio was over a minute behind Serre at 31:41.80 to place second. Third spot went to Pat Hnatiuk

of Massey Ontario with a time of 31:58.52. Minden musher Jesse Loughheed placed fifteenth at 36:50.48 with his brother Caleb in twentieth spot at 38:16.38.

The event, which is sponsored by Martin Pet Foods of

Elmira, makers of Techni-Cal Dog Food, attracted thousands of spectators to Minden on both days of the weekend. The race had originally been scheduled for January 17 and 18, but had to be postponed due to poor trail conditions.



Leigh Gilchrist of Brechin, Ontario, and his team charge for the finish line during the Saturday heat of the Minden Techni-Cal Challenge Sled Dog Derby. The Gilchrist team was one of nearly 70 to compete during the weekend.

SIRCH book is a guide for other communities

In a quiet room at the University of Toronto, on January 26, a Haliburton County dream became a reality. SIRCH Inc. held a book launch for the book *From Dream to Reality*, the story of how the Women's Emergency House in Haliburton was conceived and created. MPP Chris Hodgson and Diane Cunningham, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Minister responsible for Women's Issues, were on hand to participate in the event.

From Dream to Reality tells the story of SIRCH's realization of the need for an emergency shelter for women in abusive situations, and the community that helped make the idea a tangible reality. It is a step by step guide for any community to construct its own emergency house. The book was originally written in 1995, but has been updated by Lon Duncombe, due to a large number of requests for information from around the world. Inquiries have been made from as far away as New

Zealand, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Holland and Japan, for help on similar projects. The hope is that with this publication, SIRCH can assist other communities in Ontario, Canada and the rest of the world, in the creation of self-sufficient emergency shelters for women.

The Executive Director of SIRCH, Gena Robertson, spoke of the grassroots community participation, hard work and dedication that built the Women's Emergency House. "From Dream to Reality outlines what we did, or didn't do and why, the obstacles, the decisions, the successes and the people involved," said Robertson. "We learned lots of lessons and we've passed those on to the reader."

Women's Emergency House was built in 1993 in response to the need for a refuge for women in Haliburton County. Prior to its construction, a woman who wanted to leave an abusive situation would have to leave the county in order to receive help. Now, after five years of operation, the Women's Emergency House has assisted 39 women and 48 children.

The facility has been accessed on almost 900 bednights. The women range in age from 17 to 64 and the children from two months to 16 years of age. The emergency house contains three bedrooms, with room for up to 12 women and children to stay for up to three weeks. It provides a safe environment and is also wheelchair accessible.

The house was built with the help of many volunteers and local businesses, who donated time, labour and materials. According to Gena Robertson, the house receives no annualized funding from the government. It survives with the help of fundraising and grants. Robertson stated that this venture, although ideal in small rural areas, such as Haliburton County, should not be considered an alternative for government funded facilities.

(more on page 3)

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